Please return to
Mrs F. E. H. Haines
23 Centre Street
New York

Minerva Leal Butte Co. Kan.
Aug. 29th 1881.

Mrs F. E. H. Haines,
Sec. Board of Home Missions.

My dear Mrs Haines.

Yours of July 30th reached me a few days ago, after being forwarded from Wewoka I. T. to me in Kan.
I left my home at Wewoka Sem. inde Nation the 15th of July arriving in Kan. the first week of Aug. I am now living on a farm fifteen miles from Oswego, our County town. The change from so active a life as I have had in the Indian County to one of seemingly quiet & inactive is not altogether to my taste. yet the home quiet is what I need & rest, I am glad to have. besides I owe a duty to my family especially my little boys, whom I fear I have too much neglected the past three years of work for others. I thank you very much for the kind letter you have written me & that I was counted worthy for the work's sake, of the warm Christian recognition breathed in your letter. Personally Dr Hill is a stranger to me, yet he has been my firm friend in trouble & been my champion when I could not be heard, only through such noble Christian workers as he represents. Now to your questions. "How long have you been in the Indian work?"
In the Autumn of 1871 the U. S. Ind. Agent Dr Henry Breiner came to Chetopa Kan. seeking a teacher for a mixed school among the Seminole Indians. Consisting of about thirty natives & Colored Children former slaves, whom they adopted as citizens. Rev. C. H. McCreery of the Pres. Church at Chetopa, my pastor, recommended me. I lived nine miles in the Country. The Agent called on me. I could not go on so short notice — fifteen minutes to decide. My husband was then preparing to go to Topeka, as representative to the Leg. I could not get my own consent to go among the Indians & he go north. I deferred my going till next year, the Agt. not wishing to accept my refusal & said he would reserve the situation for me. Sickness in my family, deaths & my own enfeebled health prevented my going till Sep. 1873. Oct. 13th of that year I opened school with three pupils at Wewoka. Many trials & discouragements attended my keeping life in the school. I went to the houses & took them in my buggy, or on my pony & persuaded others to come.
"The Language"?
I do not converse in any Indian language. I had an interpreter, I became familiar with words & taught them through the colored children's broken English reaching them through their own language by aid of an interpreter & objects. I never desired to acquire the language, I soon made them understand the English & they did not depend on me, knowing I could not speak their language. My pupils spoke ...

& did not appear as kind, as those who were educated in boarding schools & were taught by those who spoke their language. My indians soon became my interpreters & I required them to do the talking in class exercises, & only when they did not understand, did I call on my interpreter, who also was one of the pupils.

"Would I learn one of their languages readily"?

I have no desire to study it, as it opens no avenues to books or higher education & my experience was demonstrated to me, that they should be taught the English only. The hope of that Country is in the Youth. Let us give them an English Course, English altogether, and they will accept our Civilization & be better helpers among their people.

"Does the knowledge of one language help one to learn another"?

Not at all. There are small tribes mingled among the leading or dominant tribes, all speaking as different languages as there are tribes. Excepting the Muskogee family which the Creeks & Seminoles represent & who speak the same language. There is quite as much similarity between their languages & the English, as exists between the language of one tribe & that of another. You understand the indian has no written language & it is quite a different task to train an undisciplined mind, from that of teaching our language. Had they a written language then I would be in favor of learning it, but I think the work of educating them is safer & surer through the English. It is not in our land as in foreign Countries. We believe the English should be the language of the whole people. The indian accepts our language & our civilization readily if taught by those who early win their confidence & teach their pupils to love them by showing that they - the teachers - love them & have come to do them good.

"Health"?

My general health is good now. My eyes are very weak, but I think my greatest trouble is in the use of glasses that do not suit me. There is a deficiency in the optic nerve & to aggravate that I had a severe attack of inflammatory sore eyes last fall, disqualifying me for anything for months, much of the time I was entirely blind. I have had weak eyes from Childhood.

"Age"? I was forty years old last January 8th.

My older boy was eight in Jan. the younger, six in June.

"Occupation"?

My husband & I taught the first few years of our married life. He has been in public life some. He was a member of the State Constitutional Convention of Feb 1868 which

gave to that State a new Constitution. We have a small stock of Cattle now & have returned to Kan. to our farm where Mr Constant expects to follow stock raising and farming.

"Salary"?

The first year I was in the indian work I was paid by Gov't. & I received $60 per month. After the Consolidation of the five tribes, creating what is now known as "Union Agency" Col. Tufts of Muskogee acting U. S. Ind. Agent, the indian fund was turned over to the Seminoles & the indian officials disbursed their own school fund. When they received their fund from Government, the teachers salaries were reduced by Council to $50. I boarded children and trained girls, taking them into my family at my own expense, which absorbed all I made, only my regular summer expenses were met. The other day school teachers received same salary & had very few pupils, while I gave my missionary work, my Sundays & all my time aside from my day school hours gratuitously, expecting my reward at the end of the race.

What did I teach"?

The branches taught are the same usually taught in our public schools in the States. I began with three little boys who could not read, I taught seven years. My last year I had fifty-six names on my roll more pupils than were in all the other five day schools also including the number taught at the Seminole Mission two miles away. My average daily attendance was some months 45 & under while many days I had over fifty. My indian girls could read, write and compose very creditable essays. Arithmetic & oral lessons in Natural Science, History, Grammar, Geography &c were taught all. One class had gone through "Hughes Introductory Arithmetic" and Common School Geography. Remember mine was a pay school, subject to the fluctuation common to District Schools, only more so, because no incentive to study was offered outside of school & no effort to keep pupils in school only what life I tried to make & the standard I endeavored to have my pupils attain by making them feel they were some body & could make their marks high in the world if they would only try. I sent one of my boys to Hampton last November.

Yes, I like housekeeping, but the care & burden of an Indian Boarding School, I do not think I my strength sufficient for. My forte is in training the young in school line S.S. work, revivals and Concert exercises and that which makes character. I can reprove a wrong in love. I do not use corporal punishment, I teach my pupils to love me.

"Sewing"? I have never done but little sewing. When in the indian Country I bought my goods ready made. My sister in Ills did my plain sewing, what I was not able to do. I taught the indian girls the use of sewing machines & my girls did their own sewing after they learned. I never made any charges for any of such work for them — I sing? Yes, but my voice is not strong as it was a few years ago. I train my pupils to sing, as that always gives life to a school. I belong to the Presbyterian Church. As to references. — Col Meacham, Editor of the "Council Fire" in Washington who is one of the Ind Committee in the Ute trouble, also was one of the Commissioners at the time of the massacre of Gen Canby by the Modocs. The Col. is a friend of mine having been on the field I was trying to cultivate has visited my school and spent weeks in my family at Wewoka, when he made payment to the different tribes. He will tell you more about my work than any one else in the indian work now, that I remember of, excepting missionaries whom I can refer you to as live and active workers. "The salt of the earth"

John Cassell

Missionary Am. S.S. Union
and stationed at
South Canadian
Chickasaw Nation I.T.

The Sec. of Missions
M. A. Wurts. Phila. of the Am. S.S. Union.

The 10th Pres. Church of Philadelphia sent my school material for a Christmas tree in 1879. You can learn of our work there. I can refer you to leading indians in the Creek Country Supt. of school, native pastors &c, but think the first two will give you all the needed information.

Col. John Q. Tufts U. S. Ind Agt at Muskogee & Maj. Vane Clerk in the Col's office will probably give you more of my work, my capabilities &c than any one else, excepting Col. Meacham and John Cassell Missionary. These workers have been on the ground which I was trying to cultivate & can speak of facts from personal observation.

I just received a letter from Louisa my pupil & interpreter of whom you mentioned in your letter. She is still working at $6 per month, trying to earn all she can. I will enclose her last note to me. Lou is very tall & slender. She will have to be assisted by some one, else I shall divide my scanty wardrobe with her. She has no warm wrap, only a light shawl suited to the climate she is in. Ought to have a traveling dress of some cheap material, and of some kind. Only could ... [illegible]

Mrs. Nellie Constant

spare their half worn Circular, it would help
I will see to her underwear as far as she
needs. She will need warm hose, & a good
pair of shoes No 8 on D last. She will need
a warm school dress of some kind. If she
were with me I could give you a more
satisfactory reply. but I left her 180 miles in
Creek Country, till I got shaped up at house-
keeping, then I promised to send for her.
She is anxious to go and I think I know she
will never bring discredit on any one, or society
that aids her now in her helplessness.
She ought to have a large trunk, hers is very
small, however, she can do without, may be
I can arrange that. Do not expend money.
If the ladies can make up the necessary articles
(excepting shoes) it will be as well, and just as
acceptable.

Length of skirt	39 in	
Waist	27 "	
From neck to bottom of waist in back	19 1/2 "	Any second
Cross the shoulder blades	15 "	hand
Bust measure	32 "	Clothing &c.
Sleeve (upper)	24 "	
" (under)	18 "	
Top of shoulder from neck	7 "	

This is the best I can give. I am not an expert
in measuring, but the above will fit. Do not
enlarge any. If some one could let her have
one of their last winter's hat it would be
a help. I have clothed boarded and kept her
in school four years & have just paid a
doctor's bill of $15, and I cannot with my
limited means do more, only I can give her
a home & not allow her to be dragged
back into heathenism by remaining among her
people who cannot appreciate her. My aim
was to send her to Hampton last year & in
two or three years she could have taken up
my work among the Seminoles, or we could
have carried it on together, but the witchcraft
trouble came on & the old chief died last
February while I am now relieved altogether
of any work among her people & can only
present her claims & urge friends to open the
way, now my work has been overturned
That the Lord may abundantly bless you, in your
great & worthy course ever guiding us by his
Fatherly hand, raising up friends for our
advancement of the Master's Kingdom, among the
heathen at home & abroad, and that we, as his
children be ever ready to "go forward" I am

my dear Mrs Haines

Copy of letter

Yours in the work

from Mrs Nellie C. Constant

Maneerva

Labette Co.

Kansas.

P.S. If articles are sent to my address for Louisa send
to Oswego Kan. Maneerva is a County P.O.

Mrs. Nellie C. Constant,
Experience with "Pine Tribes"
taught Seminoles
1881,- Aug. 29.